

**Central Coventry Fire District**

**Board Meeting**

**October 10, 2013 – 7:00 p.m.**

**1670 Flat River Rd.**

**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order – 7:08 p.m.**

**2. Roll Call**

**President: Fred P. Gralinski**

**Vice President: Marie Baker**

**Directors: – Cynthia A. Fagan-Perry, Robert G. Hadley- Excused,  
Maureen K. Jendzejec, Daniel K. Lantz Jr., Helen G. Quinn**

**Treasurer:**

**Tax Collector:**

**Clerk: Christine Moniz**

**Chief: Andrew J. Baynes**

**President of the Union Dave Gorman**

**Legal Counsel Dave Dagostino**

**Also in attendance - members of the public, and Fire Department**

**Approve the minutes from 09/11/2013, 09/18/2013 and 09/24/2013,  
10/2/2013.**

**Motion made to approve the minutes for 09/11/2013, 09/18/2013, 09/24/2013, and 10/2/2013. Motion made by Director Fagan-Perry and Seconded by Director Quinn  
All Voted Aye.**

**The President of the Board then introduced V.P. Baker to provide an update on the progress of the Board. She thanked everyone for coming out tonight it shows that you are concerned about our community and that you will stand with us to try to rebuild it. Fix the errors of the past and move forward.**

**The presentation is as follows:**

**The Road to Success**

**starts with an Honest assessment of where you are,  
A clear Goal that defines what you need to accomplish,  
The Outline of a Plan to follow,  
and Strong leaders that will work hard,  
who are flexible, but tenacious, who will never quit until the  
Goal is achieved.**

**CCFD is an Organization  
formed by the People that live in  
The Central Coventry Fire District  
Our Mission Statement is  
To provide excellent**

**Fire and Rescue services to the people  
that live in this district  
with the Tax Dollars that they are willing to  
provide to us.**

**This is a small town, like many others across America  
It was founded by people like you and I that worked hard to build  
these towns, so that the people in their communities could be offered  
safety and services  
that would benefit everyone .**

**This is also a Rural District, and I say that  
because 30-40 % of the houses in this District do Not have Fire  
Hydrants in front of their homes that would be available in case of a  
fire.**

**That changes the Protection plan as to how  
Fire services are offered to you.**

**Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this  
continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the  
proposition that all men are created equal.**

- It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished  
work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.**
- It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining  
before us -- that from these honored dead, we take increased  
devotion to their cause, for which they gave their last full measure of**

**devotion -- that we here highly resolve, that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. Abraham Lincoln**

**The Members of this Board were elected by the Central Coventry residents and they voted for us because they wanted change.**

**They believed that we would follow through and that we would represent their voices as we took on the responsibilities of this Board.**

**The public should know if they find the need to criticize decisions made by this Board, Remember there is no one Board Member making decisions on his or her own.**

**This is not just Fred's Budget -**

**This is the Board's Budget.**

**We are a team, and we are going to continue to work as one team, to bring about the changes that are required here, and now.**

**For the Voters that wanted change- we need you to support us as we work to rebuild and reorganize our CCFD**

**A New Future begins by understanding the errors of the past and making sure they are not repeated.**

**IN 2010 & 2011 Property Accessed Value on which the Budget was based- included Property that was abandoned--the Taxes were found to be uncollectible. This became known as the Assessment error which led to uncollected Revenue of \$800,000 that is now part of our**

**long term debt to be amortized.**

**The Chief of the Fire Company – He purchased equipment that was not beneficial to the district. He purchased a Hazmat Truck that was never discussed or ever approved by the Board of Directors. He charged it to his CC and then requested his reimbursement. This equipment will never be used and cost the district \$25,000**

**An Equipment committee was formed to find and purchase a replacement fire truck When they asked the Chief what their budget limit was – he said their was no limit and they found the Tower truck for an actually great price of \$850,000 given it's quality. But it wasn't the type of truck we would run daily and was used twice.**

**It has been returned to the lease company.**

**Now Chief Baynes informs us that the Federal Grant money that was received by Seltzer for previous grants cannot be accounted for. The Grants he applied for were never fully processed and therefore we currently cannot apply for any new Federal grants towards new equipment. Homeland security and the FBI are investigating.**

- The current Board has reviewed the IAFF contract. We have found that the last approved budget and IAFF contract(s) were never signed by the Chief of the Fire company. They were signed by Fire Fighters.**

**Lack of management allowed the employees to actually approve their own agreements.**

- The Old Treasurer and the Old Board continued to apply for loans to cover the revenue short falls – thus leading to Operating Losses over the last 4 years which, at the end of 2012, amounted to**

**\$2,234,063.**

- **In the middle of the year 2011/2012– The Chief knew they were in trouble so he choose to leave us and move on to a different District. The Treasurer became sick in April 2012 and never returned. Following that other Board members resigned.**
- **The lack of an Audit which would have supplied the Board with better information was never performed.**
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- **With the Treasurer out very sick, he wasn't there to manage the loans or cash flow– Therefore by Sept 2012 there was no money left in the bank to pay the Salaries, Retirement expenses, or Loans. Debtors reported the lack of payments and our Fire Company was turned over to the government and put into Receivership.**
- **The Special Master was then appointed to Financially manage our Fire company, in October of 2012. In March 2013 he presented to us a new Budget. His presentation showed us a list of concessions that he told us he had managed to secure with the IAFF –**
- **We were led to believe that these would save us \$400,000. The Board has since learned that these were only temporary postponement of expenses, and not real concessions, which have now become added Debt to the District. The cuts are now being grieved by the IAFF meaning that they expect to be paid for these concessions.**
- **So the Debt has continued to grow.**

- We need to come together to realize that it's going to take some time to get back on our feet, and a few more months to improve our business model.
- We need to let you know that the New Board's main objective is to resolve these issues and bring back the People's faith but it takes more than 14 weeks to fix problems that have grown over the last 5 years.
- In the last 13 weeks, what has the Board accomplished:
- (1) Hired a Lawyer to help us learn many official processes to help us address any Open Meeting laws or Public Document requests and to assist in IAFF negotiations.
- (2) Hired an Outside Accountant to get a non biased financial picture of where our Company stands. He has assisted with the 3 Budgets we have put together presented to the Courts.
- (3) The Equipment Committee has analyzed existing equipment (functioning or non functioning) and is working at finding creative ways to extend the lives of the existing equipment and ways to Auction off or Sell any antique or unused equipment.
- (4) We have all had several meetings with Chief Baynes We found that the Tower Truck did not give our Fire Fighters the equipment they needed to use on a daily basis and from a financial standpoint, at a cost of \$147,000 annually it was not a practical purchase. The Chief agreed and therefore the Board voted to return it to the Leasing company.
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- (5) We have extended out the actual cost of the IAFF Contract and we have found the previous Budget(s) were not sufficient to cover the contract's salary expenses which has added to the previous year's losses.
- (6) We have worked with the Special Master to try to gather our financial Information. We have attended Court Hearings – worked with the Accountants, and we've been meeting with the IAFF.
- (6) We have formed committees – Equipment, Alternate Plan and Financial and performed studies into multiple Insurance Plans to see find the best options are for the best cost.
- We continue to analyze all of our expenses to find where we can save Tax Dollars.

That is just a brief summary of what we have Accomplished. We are proud of our work.

- The Contract
- It mandates how many Fire Fighters must be kept on staff.
- It mandates the Hours, Shifts, Minimum Manning, and Benefits
- Overtime Cost is actually Replacement Cost – meaning that if a Fire Fighter takes their Vacation, Sick, Personal, or Family time off, another Fire Fighter has to work their shifts. If that Replacement Fire Fighter has already worked a full week, the vacation coverage must be paid out at an OT rate.
- It is a Big City contract similar to the City of Cranston or Johnston
- From an Operational standpoint, it restricts the Chief from make any Labor/Cost cutting measures and restricts the board from being able to suggest any that might benefit our Company.



- But what you should understand about the last IAFF contract that was signed by Past President – Girard Bouchard, and by Dave Gorman, it states that the contract will never end.

- That means that at the end of 2015, if we the Board and the IAFF cannot agree on new terms, their old Contract remains in place until arbitration might allow us to work on negotiating new terms.

- The H6101 Bill –submitted by Scott Guthrie– was presented to the General Assembly and it added the ability to allowed for Tier Taxing –but It also mandated that any time a Budget is not approved by the people that the last budget will be put back in place until a new one can be agreed upon. If our budget was one that

- was in balance, and not forcing us back into bankruptcy that would be great.

- **WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?**

**IT MEANS that If the**

**Tax Payers Vote No ???**

**the last Budget will be put back in place**

**and that means the Tax Rate charged to you will be**

**2.70 per Thousand.**

**At this time, the Board would like to Present to you the**

**The Budgets we have reviewed.**

**If anyone wants copies of this power point you can obtain it from the clerk's office at 240 Arnold Rd.**

**The President of the Board thanked V.P. Baker for her presentation and commented that the Board needed to strike a balance between personnel costs and the overall costs to run the district to obtain a balance budget. (The full recording can be obtained in the clerk's office)**

**Marie Baker went over the three budgets that were presented to the public. She explained the choice of the three budgets and the President stated that they did not make any copies to pass out tonight. The President asked if it was something we could place on the website or if the Times could post in the paper.**

**Mr. Vacca wanted to know what the Union is willing to give up in the contract. The Lawyer explained that as of now they are still under the agreement that the Union made with the Special Master but as of now it is only for the short term. The Board needs to sit down and meet with the Union. Mr. Vacca also inquired about the misconduct of the prior Treasurer and Chief and where that was going. Director Fagan-Perry stated that it is still an ongoing investigation.**

**Mr. Tobin, the Solicitor for the Town of Coventry, inquired about the line item for the repayment of the \$300,000 owed to the Town. He asked why the Board of Central Coventry Fire District left it at zero. The Town loaned the District the money in good faith and that they expect to get it paid back as soon as possible. He then asked they**

readdress this line item and ensure that the amount for repayment is put back into the budget. The President of the Board stated that it is built into the line item that is set up for repayment of debt. The solicitor wants it added back in when the Board presents the budget to Judge Stern.

Mr. Gizzarelli inquired if anyone know what the figure would be if we liquidated the District. He wanted a solid figure due to the fact it would be so high and the tax payers still would not have fire service. The President stated he does not have the figure but it would be something that would get paid across time. He then thanked Mr. Gizzarelli for staying within his three minute time.

Mr. Conrad Burns would like to bring up the expense part of the budget. He claims that there are some holes in it. Street light removal was budgeted for the removal for 29,000. 00 that can be removed. In all three budgets you project the same for operating budget. If you close station then the operation side should be trimmed. He does not blame the board because they are not getting the information from Mr. Land that they need. Mr. Burns just wanted the Board to take another look at expense side. He asked the Board is this budget subject to amendment. The President passed on that question tonight.

Appointment of Moderator to preside at the Special Meeting, October 21, 2013. Director Fagan-Perry made a motion that they appoint Mr.

**Timothy Bliss as the moderator for the special meeting on October 21, 2013 and it was Seconded by Director Jendzejec.**

**All Voted Aye**

**Discussion public stated that the Board cannot appoint a moderator according to the Charger. The President of the Board stated that they are still under receivership and that the Judge approved it. They are just doing what the Judge approved. If anyone has any complaints take it up with the court.**

**Ratification of Board's Budget – was put off until another meeting at the suggestion of the Judge. The Board will reschedule another meeting on Tuesday night, October 15th to go over the budget and vote, also they will be meeting with the union. There will also be a meeting on the 17 of October. The 17th is scheduled for anything that will be in the budget and will be up for discussion.**

**Update on Court Hearing – no update**

**Discussion/Action on Old/unfinished or new business – a motion was made by Director Fagan-Perry to table the unfinished business and seconded by Director Quinn**

**All Voted Aye.**

**Motion made by President to adjourn into Executive Session and roll**

**call taken VP Baker, Director Jendzejec, Director Lantz, Director Quinn, Director Fagan-Perry and Director Hadley all voted yes.**

**Board adjourned into closed session at 8:25 p.m.**